



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270**

Office of the Regional Administrator

Tricia Cortez
Executive Director
Rio Grande International Study Center
1 West End Washington St Bldg
Laredo, TX 78040

Dear Councilmember Perez,

Thank you for your October 14 letter regarding ethylene oxide emissions from Midwest Sterilization Corporation (MSC), a commercial sterilizer plant in Laredo, Texas. I appreciate you highlighting and discussing these concerns in your letter, as well as in the follow up meeting on October 19 that I understand Matthew Tejada, Director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice in Washington, D.C., and our Region 6 Acting Director of the Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment, Olivia Balandran, held with you and Councilmember Vanessa Perez to further discuss the Laredo community concerns regarding ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions from MSC.

Per your request that EPA's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) conduct a community meeting, our office will be working with you and Councilmember Vanessa Perez, as agreed during the October 19 meeting, to determine an appropriate timeframe to schedule a community meeting in Laredo. Olivia Balandran, of my staff, will coordinate further discussions with you and RGISC to plan the Laredo community meeting.

In reference to your concern that EPA did not include the MSC in its recent announcement that it is considering requiring 31 facilities to report EtO releases to the TRI, this facility was not included because we only included those that do not currently report to TRI. The MSC Laredo facility is already reporting to TRI; therefore, it was not included on this list.

While additional research is underway at EPA to improve our ability to properly monitor for EtO in air, EPA is conducting air dispersion and human health inhalation risk modeling as part of the ongoing national air toxics rulemaking: Ethylene Oxide Emissions Standards for Sterilization Facilities: National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP). The community around the MSC Laredo facility is included in this assessment being conducted as part of this national rulemaking.

EPA is currently collecting and analyzing commercial sterilizer emissions and emission control data to craft a stronger national rule for these facilities. A proposed rule revision to better address public risks from commercial sterilizer ethylene oxide emissions is expected to be published for public comment in late Spring 2022.

We look forward to working with you and Councilmember Vanessa Perez in planning a community meeting with Laredo constituents. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Olivia Balandran, Acting Director, Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment, at (214) 665-7257 or [[HYPERLINK "mailto:balandran.olivia-r@epa.gov"](mailto:balandran.olivia-r@epa.gov)].

Sincerely,

David W. Gray
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: The Honorable Vanessa Perez
Laredo City Councilmember